

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Bureau of Land Management****Order Extending Temporary Closure to Non-Authorized Use of Certain Public Lands in Ward Valley, San Bernardino County, California**

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Needles Field Office.

ACTION: Order extending for one year the temporary order of closure to non-authorized uses of certain public lands in Ward Valley.

SUMMARY: BLM is extending for one year the initial temporary closure of approximately 2,000 acres within Ward Valley, California, as published in the **Federal Register** on January 29, 1998, 63 FR 4467. The initial closure order was effective February 13, 1998, and was effective for a period of six months from that date. The lands involved in this extension and the scope of the closure are not changed.

EFFECTIVE DATE: By this extension, the closure order will continue in effect and will remain effective until August 13, 1999.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This order extending the closure to non-authorized uses of the Ward Valley lands is necessary to facilitate BLM management of authorized activities on the Ward Valley site, protect the desert tortoise and its critical habitat, and prevent unnecessary damage to sensitive natural resources. In light of questions raised regarding the authority of the California Department of Health Services to purchase the site, actions to proceed with on-site testing described in the initial order of closure will not go forward at present. However, lifting the closure would increase the likelihood of greater public use and the potential for adverse impacts from uncontrolled day and overnight activities. Such uncontrolled activities could generate additional traffic and litter; increase risk of fire, dust, and noise; adversely affect the desert tortoise and its critical habitat as well as other wildlife species and their habitats; damage vegetation; and pose additional environmental and safety problems. Therefore, continued closure of the affected lands would protect sensitive natural resources while allowing authorized users to continue to utilize the site under controlled conditions.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Molly Brady, Needles Field Office Manager, U.S.D.I., Bureau of Land Management, Needles Resource Area, 101 West Spikes Road, Needles, California 92363, tel: (760) 326-7000.

Approved.

Ed Hastey,

BLM State Director, California State Office.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Bureau of Land Management**

[MT-921-08-1320-01; MTM 88405]

Notice of Coal Lease Application—MTM 88405—Spring Creek Coal Company

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This is notice of Spring Creek Coal Company's coal lease application MTM 88405 for certain coal resources within the Powder River Coal Region.

The lands included in Coal Lease Application MTM 88405 are located in Big Horn County, Montana, and are described as follows:

T. 8 S., R. 39 E., P.M.M.

Sec. 13: SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$,
SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$

Sec. 14: S $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$,
S $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$,
NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$,
NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$

Sec. 23: NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$,
N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, E $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$

Sec. 24: NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$,
N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$
150.00 acres

Spring Creek Coal Company is the surface owner of all of the lands applied for.

The 150.00-acre tract contains an estimated 15.4 million tons of recoverable coal reserves. The area is bordered by the Spring Creek Mine to the South.

The application will be processed in accordance with the provisions of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended (30 U.S.C. 181, 35 seq.), and the implementing regulations at 43 CFR 3400. A decision to allow leasing of the coal resources in said tract will result in a competitive lease sale to be held at a time and place to be announced through publication pursuant to 43 CFR 3422.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Spring Creek Coal Company is the lessee and operator of Coal Lease MTM 069782 at the Spring Creek Mine. The proposed lease area adjoins the current lease to the North and contains approximately 105 acres within the approved mine permit area.

On June 1, 1998, Spring Creek Coal Company received Federal Coal Exploration License MTM 87910 from

the BLM to conduct drilling on lands contained within the Spring Creek coal lease application tract. Data from the completed drilling program conducted under MTM 87910, and preceding drilling programs, will be or has been forwarded to the BLM, as required by the terms of the exploration licenses.

Due to its coal reserve base and configuration, the Spring Creek lease application tract is a logical step to extend the life of the Spring Creek Mine. With the current permitted reserves of coal, the current level of production at the Spring Creek Mine can be maintained for approximately 19 additional years.

The area applied for would be mined as an extension of the Spring Creek Mine and would utilize the same methods as those currently being used. The lease being applied for can extend the life of the mine by about 2 years and enable recovery of coal that might never be mined if not mined as a logical extension of current pits at the Spring Creek Mine.

Notice of Availability: The application is available for review between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. at the Bureau of Land Management, Montana State Office, 222 North 32nd Street, Billings, Montana 59101, and at the Bureau of Land Management, Miles City Field Office, whose address is Garryowen Road, Miles City, Montana 59103, between the hours of 7:45 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rebecca Good, Coal Coordinator, at telephone (406) 255-2828, Bureau of Land Management, Montana State Office, 222 North 32nd Street, P.O. Box 36800, Billings, Montana 59107-6800.

Dated: July 27, 1998.

Janet Singer,

State Director.

[FR Doc. 98-20961 Filed 8-5-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Bureau of Land Management**

[WY-030-1320-00 [WYW139975]]

Ark Land Company Coal Lease Application, Carbon County, WY

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Availability of Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Notice of Public Hearing.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to 40 CFR 1500-1508, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announces the availability of a